

NSC BRIEFING

11 January 1961

KHRUSHCHEV'S STATUS

I. Khrushchev and company, in private, talking increasingly about their own problems.

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A. Khrushchev mentioned recently [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] about pressures on him to accomplish something on Berlin question.

1. Unspecified "internal pressures" frequently used, however, as negotiating gambit with Westerners.

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B. Khrushchev deputy (Ignatov) recently admitted [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that agricultural program suffered serious setback last year.

1. We know, for instance, that grain for 1959 and 1960 is roughly 20% below 1958. Plan, however, called for grain production 70% over '58.

II. Ambassador Thompson recently suggested that either Berlin or the agricultural problem could threaten Khrushchev's position.

III. At this point, however, Khrushchev very much dominating the scene.

A. Told party Central Committee Session yesterday to expect further cleanup of agricultural officials. (He fired his agriculture minister a few days ago.)

B. Party Congress has been set for October, and Khrushchev is slated to give the major reports and set forth future programs.

1. Thompson cites this as obvious evidence of Khrushchev's present strength. We concur.

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